CPS HR CONSULTING

Action Plan: Recommendations - Key Drivers to Maintain

Surveying employees and reviewing your results is only the start of the process. The real reward is identifying and taking steps to improve engagement.

The Action Plan Recommendations Report will help you conduct action planning by providing suggestions on actions you may take in response to your survey results. The recommendations report suggestions are for the key "maintain" questions for your organization.

We identify these questions based on the key driver analysis. While you should decide what will work best in your organization, these suggestions and resources can help you develop an action plan. This report includes the following sections:

Understanding the Question – this section provides a high-level understanding of the survey question and why it is important.

Thought Starters – it is important to first understand the issues behind the results for a specific question. This section includes several thought-starter questions to help you think about possible root causes.

Action Plan Steps – this section lists possible actions to consider for your action plan. These suggestions are based on our research and experience.

Additional Resources

The "Action Plan Resources List" (available as a PDF download below) is meant to be used in conjunction with the Action Plan Recommendations to develop possible solutions. This document lists guides, templates, checklists, articles, videos, books, and other resources. to help you develop additional action-planning ideas.

- ***Guides, Templates, Checklists, and Other Resources –*** these resources contain step-by-step instructions, lists of ideas, customizable templates, or other types of practical ideas linked to specific survey dimensions or questions.

- ***Videos –*** short videos by thought leaders (e.g., TED Talks) cover ideas relevant to a survey question category.

- ***Articles –*** resources with ideas to address specific survey dimensions or questions.

- ***Books*** – these can be used to further develop your expertise on the issue (e.g., after you develop your action plan). Listed books often cover many areas in a particular survey question category.

CPS HR Training Courses – training resources offered by CPS HR. To learn more about course availability, visit the CPS HR Training Center home page: Training Center | CPS HR Consulting CPS HR offers a variety of delivery formats including virtual training, open-enrollment programs, on-site training and hosted sessions.

1. My department's mission is important to me

Understanding the Question

Employees want to believe in what their organization does. The stronger the connection between an employee's interests and values, and the mission of the organization, the more employees will do whatever it takes (i.e., deliver "discretionary effort") to help the organization accomplish its goals.

Thought Starters

- Does the organization have a clear mission statement, and is it widely and effectively communicated to employees?
- Does the organization have measurable outcomes that connect to the mission?
- How visible is the connection between employees' day-to-day work and the organization's mission?

Action Plan Steps

- Ensure there is a clear and concise mission statement that is communicated widely and effectively.
- Identify and report on measurable organizational outcomes that link directly to mission.
- Incorporate links to mission into employee position descriptions, goals and objectives.
- Encourage supervisors to explain the link between the work of their direct reports and the organization's mission.
- During performance management/evaluation discussions, ensure that supervisors cover how the work of individual employees links to the mission -- and why their work is important.
- When employees are assigned to projects, explain how projects tie into the organization's mission.
- Publicly recognize employees' accomplishments and how they contribute to the mission of the organization.
- During new employee onboarding, ensure that the organization's mission is explained (e.g., by senior leaders, supervisors, HR).
- During staff meetings, describe the organization's accomplishments, and relate them to the mission.

2. I feel I can make a difference by working here

Understanding the Question

Government agencies strive to make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. Employees want to do work that is meaningful, and understand how what they do contributes to achieving the organization's mission. They also want to help the organization improve. When employees believe they are achieving results that are valuable, they will be productive, effective and engaged.

Thought Starters

- Does the organization have a clear and concise mission statement that connects the organization's work to making a difference in the lives of the people it serves?
- Is this mission statement widely communicated to all staff?
- How well do employees understand the mission statement?
- Does the organization have measurable outcomes that connect to its mission and impact?
- How well do managers/supervisors communicate to employees about how their work makes a difference?
- Are there ways (formal and informal) for employees to offer suggestions on how the organization can improve its effectiveness?

Action Plan Steps

- Ensure there is a clear and concise mission statement that connects the organization's work to making a difference for the people the organization serves.
- Communicate the mission statement widely and effectively to employees.
- Incorporate links to mission into employee position descriptions, goals and objectives.
- Identify and report (e.g., to employees) on measurable organizational outcomes that link directly to mission and customers.
- Ensure that managers/supervisors provide regular feedback to employees, including on the connection between their specific jobs/work and the organization's mission and accomplishments.
- Help managers/supervisors (through training, coaching and feedback) develop good communication skills, including encouraging their employees to suggest ideas, and being effective listeners.
- Provide opportunities for employees to directly connect with the organization's customers and stakeholders.
- Publicly recognize employees' accomplishments and how they advance the organization's mission.
- During new employee onboarding, ensure that the organization's mission and impact are explained (e.g., by senior leaders, supervisors, HR).
- During staff meetings, highlight accomplishments, and relate them to the mission.
- Collect feedback from customers and share the feedback with employees.
- Put in place a formal process (e.g., through a survey or web site) for employees to submit ideas for improvements.
- Publicize ideas that are implemented.
- Recognize and reward employees who submit these ideas.
- Include, as a regular meeting agenda item, the opportunity for employees to discuss their ideas for improvement.
- Encourage managers/supervisors to ask for input when they meet one-on-one with employees.

- Encourage managers/supervisors to create an environment where new ideas are welcome and it is safe to question the status quo.

3.

My department is successful at accomplishing its mission

Understanding the Question

Employees want to be part of an organization that has a clear and important mission, and is successfully achieving that mission.

Thought Starters

- Does the organization have a clear mission, and is that mission communicated effectively to all employees?
- Do managers/supervisors understand their role in communicating about the mission of the organization (and their work units) and progress achieving that mission?
- Does the organization have clear measures fo success and goal achievement?
- Are these measures, and progress toward achieving them, communicated to all employees?

Action Plan Steps

- Create and communicate a clear and concise mission statement.
- Develop specific performance measures (for the organization and work units) linked to this mission, monitor these measures and communicate progress.
- Ensure that managers/supervisors help their employees connect their jobs and results to the mission.
- Help managers/supervisors (e.g., through training, coaching and feedback) develop the skills to create and maintain high-performing teams.
- Ensure that senior leaders discuss the mission, and progress toward meeting it.
- Regularly assess communication needs throughout the organization and identify steps to communicate effectively.
- Allow employees to meet with senior management to ask questions about the future of the organization and how the organization is progressing towards achieving its mission.
- Ensure that managers/supervisors have the tools and support to lead with poor performers -- and that poor performance is addressed.
- Create recognition programs to acknowledge superior team performance.

4.

I have the resources I need to do my job well

Understanding the Question

When employees have the resources they need to perform well, they will deliver results and be engaged. Resources can include more than people and funding.

Thought Starters

- What resource constraints may be preventing employees from accomplishing their work?
- What resources do employees need to succeed (and which would be good to have but aren't absolutely necessary)?
- How do managers/supervisors know if employees have the resources they need?
- Could access to information be a critical resource?

Action Plan Steps

- Meet with employees to discuss what specific resources they need that they don't have.
- Build the business case to present to decision makers about how more and better resources will improve performance, and ultimately serve stakeholders better.
- Identify what employees need that doesn't require funding and determine how to provide these resources. While cost may prohibit giving employees all they need, there may be resources you can provide (e.g., information) that do not require funding.
- Meet with employees to discuss alternative resources that can meet their needs.

5.

My workload is reasonable

Understanding the Question

When employees consistently feel that they are not able to complete their work during regular work hours, this can lead to burnout and low engagement. Organizations should carefully evaluate current workloads to ensure that employees can complete their work within reasonable time frames.

Thought Starters

- Are work units adequately staffed?
- Are your organization's leaders and supervisors role models to employees for practicing good work-life balance (e.g., do they "unplug" while they are on vacation)?
- Are employees' jobs structured so that workloads are reasonable?
- When work is assigned, how are workloads assessed to ensure that employees are not overloaded?

Action Plan Steps

- Be honest with employees about what adjustments may be possible to enhance work-life balance, given job demands.
- Put in place processes to measure and track workloads to ensure employees are not overloaded.
- Consider hiring additional, part-time or temporary employees to augment current staff (e.g., for hours and shifts that are difficult to fill).
- Review staffing models to determine if adjustments need to be made.
- Communicate to employees how staffing is determined.
- Consider implementing or expanding workplace flexibilities, and ensure that employees know what flexibilities are available and how to request/use them.
- Help managers/supervisors understand why reasonable workloads and flexibility are important to maximize performance and productivity.

6. I am satisfied with my Work Schedule Flexibility

Understanding the Question

Employment conditions are a key component of the organization's ability to attract and retain talent. Many organizations also consider employment conditions to be part of their total rewards strategy. These conditions can refer to a variety of factors and, therefore, individual employees' responses may refer to different conditions.

Thought Starters

- What employment conditions could employees be referring to when responding to this question?
- What workplace fliexibilities does the organization offer?
- Do managers/supervisors understand the value and use of these flexibilities?
- Do employees understand what flexibilities are available and how to request/access them?
- Are there additional employment flexibilities that that employees may want, but the organization does not currently offer?

Action Plan Steps

- Evaluate the scope and use of current work conditions and flexibilities, particularity compared to organizations that compete for the same talent. This evaluation should include an assessment of leave policies.
- Consider implementing additional flexible work arrangements (e.g., flextime, compressed workweeks, shift work, part-time schedules, job-sharing, telecommuting and paid time off instead of separate sick and vacation leaves).
- Ensure that managers/supervisors understand the value of workplace flexibilities and that supervisors allow their employees to participate in them when it makes sense for both the employee and the job.
- Ensure employees understand the different types of employment flexibilities offered by the organization -- and how they can apply to use them.
- Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of workplace flexibilities and adjust (expand or contract) as necessary.

7. My department respects individual differences (e.g., cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas)

Understanding the Question

As workforces become more and more diverse, it becomes increasingly important that the organization creates an environment where all employees, regardless of their differences, feel respected.

Thought Starters

- Are respect and inclusion core values in the organization?
- Are these values documented in policies?
- How effectively has the organization communicated to all employees its commitment to diversity and inclusion?
- Do managers/supervisors understand what inclusion means and how to manage so that all employees feel respected and included?
- Is the organization taking specific steps to create a diverse workforce, at all levels?
- Are there mechanisms for employees to report incidents where managers, supervisors and other employees do not act in ways that respect individual differences?
- Does the organization recognize and/or facilitate employee affinity groups or employee networks (e.g., based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, military service, sexual orientation)?

Action Plan Steps

- Consider making "respect" an explicit core value of the organization, embedded in formal policy.
- Help managers/supervisors understand respect and inclusion, why they are important, and how to create and maintain respectful and inclusive work environments (e.g., through training, workshops, coaching and feedback). Include understanding differences in employee communication styles and how to communicate effectively across these different styles.
- Institute a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory or disrespectful acts.
- Hold managers/supervisors accountable for creating inclusive work environments (e.g., part of the performance management process).
- Develop a tool kit resource for managers that covers dealing with difficult diversity issue
- Provide mechanisms for employees to report through a third party (e.g., HR) instances of disrespectful behavior.
- Employees may not be comfortable discussing this item openly. Consider bringing in a third-party facilitator (e.g., from HR) to uncover root causes for employees' responses to this question.
- Develop a tool kit for managers that covers dealing with difficult diversity issues.

8. I feel valued for the work I do

Understanding the Question

Employees need to feel that managers and others recognize the contributions they make to the organization and their team. There are many ways for the organization and managers/supervisors to ensure employees feel valued. It is important to understand that recognition does not need to be financial.

Thought Starters

- What ways are employees formally recognized?
- What ways are employees informally recognized?
- How frequently are employees recognized?
- Are managers/supervisors aware of a range of ways, including non-financial, to recognize good performance?
- Is team performance recognized?
- Does the organization have the resources and systems/processes to financially recognize superior performance?

Action Plan Steps

- Make sure managers have the commitment, knowledge and resources (e.g., through training, coaching and feedback) to recognize employees' good work, in a variety of ways. Recognition should include informal and non-financial approaches.
- Ensure that recognizing employee performance is an expectation for managers/supervisors, and then hold them accountable (e.g., through the performance management system).
- Managers should determine how each employee prefers to be recognized. For instance, some employees may like to be publicly recognized while others may not. Provide recognition to employees based on how they prefer to be recognized.
- Establish multiple ways to recognize good performance. Ensure that processes and details (e.g., application processes, criteria, types of awards) are widely communicated, understood and used.
- Consider establishing a range of recognition awards (e.g., "Employee of the Month;" awards for innovation, exceptional service, teamwork) using specific criteria. Consider allowing employees to nominate colleagues.
- Provide length-of-service awards at staff meetings.
- Communicate individual and team accomplishments to the leadership team and make the deserving employees aware that senior leadership knows about these accomplishments.